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ABSTRACT

The Talent Development approach to helping greater numbers of students succeed in middle school is based on a belief that all students can learn challenging material if the right types of support are given. This report presents the essential components of the Talent Development framework and describes their initial implementation in Evans Junior High School, Washington, D.C. and Central East Middle School, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania). The essential components of the framework include a curriculum aimed at active learning, an emphasis on cultural empowerment, a communal organization of school, a total detracking of instruction, growth-oriented assessment, a multilayered pedagogy, career exploration, and family affirmation. Evans Junior High School is a regular junior high in a low socioeconomic area of the city. It enrolls approximately 320 students, all of whom are African American. Approximately 25% receive Title I services and about 6% are in special education. Central Middle School has about 1,000 students in grades 5 through 8, mostly from low socioeconomic levels. The school has a highly diverse student body, with about 45% Hispanic students, 24% African American, 13% Asian, 8% White, and about 10% who define themselves in other ways. Although the implementation of the Talent Development approach is in its early stages, these schools are recognizably different from schools operating under the traditional sorting paradigm. Three appendixes discuss student team writing and reading, the career exploration approach and decision-making training, and present active affirmation program materials. (Contains 1 figure and 34 references.) (SLD)

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THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Essential Components

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Report No. 3 / September 1996

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Essential Components

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Report No. 3

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The Center

Every child has the capacity to succeed in school and in life. Yet far too many children, especially those from poor and minority families, are placed at risk by school practices that are based on a sorting paradigm in which some students receive high-expectations instruction while the rest are relegated to lower quality education and lower quality futures. The sorting perspective must be replaced by a "talent development" model that asserts that all children are capable of succeeding in a rich and demanding curriculum with appropriate assistance and support.

The mission of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR) is to conduct the research, development, evaluation, and dissemination needed to transform schooling for students placed at risk. The work of the Center is guided by three central themes — ensuring the success of all students at key development points, building on students' personal and cultural assets, and scaling up effective programs — and conducted through seven research and development programs and a program of institutional activities.

CRESPAR is organized as a partnership of Johns Hopkins University and Howard University, in collaboration with researchers at the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of California at Los Angeles, University of Oklahoma, University of Chicago, Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation, WestEd Regional Laboratory, University of Memphis, and University of Houston-Clear Lake.

Abstract

The Talent Development approach to helping greater numbers of students succeed in middle school is based on a belief that all students can learn challenging material if the right types of support are given. The approach draws upon insights from recent research on alternatives to tracking, on the components of effective middle schools, and on clear theories of how to foster the positive relationships and supportive conditions that are so important to middle school adolescents, especially those adolescents placed at risk. This report presents the essential components of the Talent Development framework and describes their initial implementation in Evans Junior High School in Washington, DC and in Central East Middle School in Philadelphia. The essential components of the framework include a curriculum aimed at active learning, an emphasis on cultural empowerment, a communal organization of school, a total detracking of instruction, growth-oriented assessment, a multi-layered pedagogy, career exploration, and family affirmation.

Acknowledgments

We especially thank the administration, the teachers, and the students and their parents at Evans Junior High School and at Central East Middle School as we work together to implement and evaluate the Talent Development Middle School Model.

Introduction

The middle school years are often "turning points" in the schooling careers of many poor and minority students (Carnegie Task Force, 1989). Although some of these students successfully progress through the middle grades, preparing themselves well for further education in high school and beyond, many others during this period begin a pattern of poor attendance, course failures, and serious disciplinary encounters that lead to early school dropout and other troubles.

A major reason for the poor outcomes of many students is the present system of tracking, which denies key learning opportunities to many students by "sorting" them into lower-level classes. Under this system, most students in the lower tracks do not receive access to (a) the core curriculum for their grade level, (b) college-preparatory and accelerated courses, (c) information and anticipatory socialization experiences needed to successfully negotiate the complexities of the lengthy college preparation and application process, and (d) courses where the teachers "teach for understanding" and emphasize the development of higher order knowledge instead of emphasizing the drill, practice, and recall of facts (Mac Iver, Reuman, & Main, 1995).

The Talent Development approach to helping greater numbers of students succeed in middle school is based on a belief that all students can learn challenging material if the right types of support are given. The approach draws upon insights from recent research on alternatives to tracking, on the components of effective middle schools, and on clear theories of how to foster the positive relationships and supportive conditions that are so important at this time of life (Becker, 1987; Braddock & McPartland, 1993; Boykin, 1994; Lipsitz, 1984; Mac Iver & Epstein, 1993; Mac Iver & Reuman, 1993; Mac Iver, Reuman, & Main, 1995; Madhere, 1995; Wheelock, 1992).

If schools are to shift from a social structuring that is based on a sorting and placement mentality to one that is based on a talent development philosophy, educators need an operating framework that is a research- and theory-based approach to motivating both teachers and students to strive for high academic outcomes. They need an operating framework that spells out new ways of: (a) presenting learning challenges to students that connect with their cultural traditions and long-term goals, (b) helping teachers appreciate the learning potential of all students, supporting different routes and different motivational attachments to high standards for different learners, and (c) rewarding both teachers and students for their joint efforts at

demanding learning tasks. The Talent Development Model provides such an operating framework.

This report presents the essential components of the Talent Development Model and summarizes their initial implementation beginning in September 1995 at Central East Middle School in Philadelphia and at Evans Junior High School in Washington, DC.

The Essential Components of the Talent Development Middle School Model

The eight fundamental components of the Talent Development Model are:

(a) **a curriculum aimed at active learning.** For all students, the core curriculum is demanding, focusing on higher order competencies, and utilizing technologies appropriate to these goals.

(b) **an emphasis on cultural empowerment.** Instruction must be attentive to cultural patterns and norms, promote cultural literacy, and help students connect to and interpret their cultural traditions.

(c) **a communal organization of school.** The school must be organized as a community to support stronger teacher-student bonds and address adolescents' needs for affiliation.

(d) **a total detracking of instruction.** Classroom organization replaces tracking with approaches that make student diversity in the classroom an asset rather than an impediment to learning and motivation.

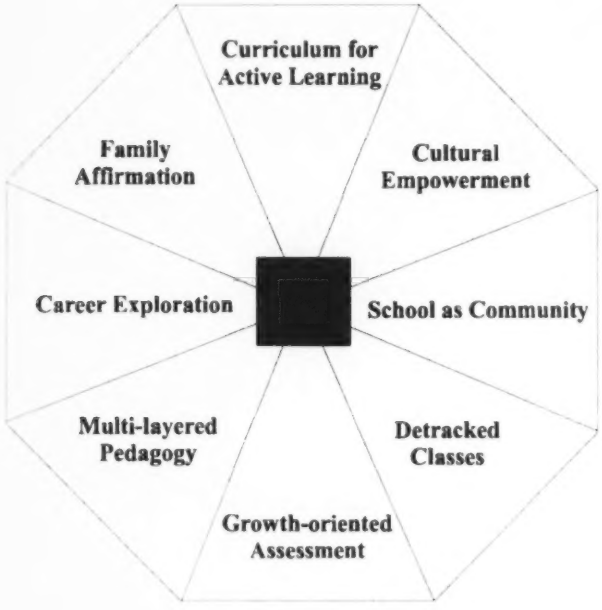
(e) **growth-oriented assessment.** The model for accountability and evaluation that the teachers use in the classroom combines ratings of both excellence and progress, so it can be successfully used with heterogeneous groups.

(f) **a multi-layered pedagogy.** This includes flexible use of time and resources to prevent course failures and grade retentions and to nurture students' talents.

(g) **career exploration.** This calls for ongoing occupational exploration and goal-setting activities that use appropriate role models and future-oriented exercises; it also involves guidance experiences that encourage students' college aspirations and provide them with information about the realistic steps toward different secondary and postsecondary options.

(h) **family affirmation.** This goes beyond the traditionally loose connection between the home and the school to involve new forms of partnerships with parents and the community to coordinate learning activities and reinforcements in each setting.

The components can be schematically presented as an octagon, as follows:



Essential Components of Talent Development Model in Middle School

Evans Junior High School and Central East Middle School

Evans Junior High School in Washington, DC is a regular junior high school, grades 7 to 9, located in a low socioeconomic area of the city. The school enrolls approximately 320 students, all of whom are African American. Enrollment is highest in the seventh grade (116 students), next in the eighth grade (91 students), and lowest in the ninth grade (78), and 35 students are in an ungraded program. Approximately 25 percent of the students receive Title I services and about six percent are in special education. A small percentage of students speak a language other than English at home. The school's 29 teachers (12 male and 17 female) are all African American.

Central East Middle School in Philadelphia includes approximately 1000 students in grades five through eight, mostly from low socioeconomic levels. The school has a highly diverse student body — about 45 percent Hispanic (most of Puerto Rican descent), 24 percent African-American, 13 percent Asian (mostly Cambodian and Vietnamese), 8 percent white, and 10 percent who identify themselves as belonging to other racial or ethnic groups, including Arab-American and biracial. Many have parents who are immigrants. About 53 percent spoke a language other than English at home before they began attending school, thus they have learned English as a second language.

Progress in Implementing The Essential Components

A Demanding Curriculum Aimed at Active Learning — For all students, the core curriculum is demanding, focusing on higher order competencies, and utilizing technologies appropriate to these goals.

In implementing this component, we have been guided by constructivist theory as well as by the research on interactive literacy (Greene & Ackerman, 1994). Working with public school staff from the Center for Systemic Change, we have begun implementing this component at Evans Junior High School in Washington, DC in the following ways:

(a) We have implemented a common curriculum for all students that includes a weekly lab period in each major subject.

(b) We have encouraged and supported a more extensive use of technology in the classroom. The school has begun to equip each classroom with a computer, a printer, a VCR, and a television set, thus giving teachers the means to combine several sources of information and use multiple strategies for delivering instruction, instead of the usual "chalk-and-talk."

(c) Plans are underway to set up a WEB page for the school this summer, and to establish an exchange program with a school in Buena Vista, CA.

(d) We have established the *Literacy Through Film* program, which promotes writing across the curriculum, literature reading, and open discussion of high-level questions in heterogenous classrooms by exposing students to a series of films about events and people that were influential in their history (e.g., *Eyes on the Prize*) and to films that directly tie math and science to themes and concerns of high interest to young adolescents (e.g., *Futures*, *Mind Your Own Body*). Each film is presented (with closed captions to engage multiple information registers and as a scaffold to support retention, comprehension, and language development)

in segments of 20 to 25 minutes. Each segment is followed by a group discussion, writing assignment, and the reading of related literature.

The demanding curriculum and active learning component has been implemented at Central East Middle School in Philadelphia by giving *all* regular students the existing "high-track" curriculum in mathematics, science, and social studies and by implementing Student Team Reading (Stevens, 1989) and Student Team Writing (Stevens, Hammonds, & Durkin, 1991) in RELA (**R**eading, **E**nglish, **L**anguage **A**rts). (Evans Junior High School is also planning extensive use of Student Team Reading and Writing, beginning in the 1996-97 school year.) The Student Team Reading (STR) and Student Team Writing (STW) organizational and instructional elements address demanding curriculum through the use of good literature and address active learning through the use of higher-order questioning, cooperative learning, and process writing. These methods also contribute positively to the implementation of other Talent Development components and will be mentioned in other sections. The STR and STW methods are described in Appendix A.

An Emphasis on Cultural Empowerment — Instruction must be attentive to cultural patterns and norms, promote cultural literacy, and help students connect to and interpret their cultural traditions.

A central operating assumption underlying the Talent Development Model is that we must always begin with the assets that students, families, and communities bring to the educational process. We rely on these assets to help us build programs and practices that respect and are sensitive to the integrity of individual children and the cultures from which they come. There is increasing evidence that cognitive functioning is context-sensitive and that a central determining feature of context is culture (Rogoff, 1990; Tharp, 1989). A context for learning and performance that is responsive to a child's prevailing cultural experiences can have facilitating effects (Erickson, 1987; LCHC, 1986; Irvine, 1990; Lee, 1992; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Jordan, 1994; Banks 1993). Such a context can provide outlets for existing or emerging competencies, lead to greater intrinsic motivation, and allow the child to draw upon personal values and "epistemologies" that can constructively guide and sustain him or her through a learning activity (Greeno, 1989; Boykin, 1994; Au & Kawakami, 1994).

In structuring this component, we have relied upon Banks' (1993) analysis of multicultural education. Banks distinguishes five dimensions of multicultural education: (a) content integration, (b) the knowledge construction process, (c) prejudice reduction, (d) a pedagogy for equity, and (e) strategies for an empowering school culture.

At Evans Junior High School, to deal with content integration, we have acquired computer software from Blackboard International, a developer of Afrocentric educational courseware. Currently, we have software in mathematics, in language arts, and in science. The science program provides appropriate exercises and bears on the contributions of African Americans to astronomy, architecture, aeronautics, medicine, manufacturing, and so on.

To address the process of knowledge construction, the Talent Development Middle Schools in Philadelphia and Washington, DC feature a pervasive use across the curriculum of literature and films whose authors and producers represent a variety of cultures and groups. Not only is this literature used to provide examples and information to illustrate key concepts, principles, and generalizations in different disciplines, but also as a springboard for discussing knowledge creation and how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, and perspectives influence a writer's or filmmaker's purposes, point of view, and interpretation of reality.

Examples of books that have been or will be used across the curriculum include: *Going Home* by Nicolasa Mohr, *Journey to Jo'burg* by Beverly Naidoo, *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George, *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, *Amos Fortune: Free Man* by Elizabeth Yates, *Circle of Gold* by Candy Dawson Boyd, *I, Juan de Pareja* by Elizabeth Barton de Trevino, *In the Year of the Boar* and *Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord, *Waiting for the Rain* by Sheila Gordon, *Shaking the Money Tree* by Mary Pat Mullaney, and *Roll of Thunder/Hear My Cry* by M. Taylor.

Examples of films include *The Color Purple, Glory, The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, Roots, Eyes on the Prize, Hoop Dreams,* and *Malcolm X.*

In addition, Central East Middle School sponsors a Multicultural Expo and an African-American Museum. The museum features student-produced exhibits and articles and involves parents and community members as speakers to students about various cultures, traditions, and histories and as an "audience" for students' exhibits, publications, and productions.

One reason the Talent Development Middle School emphasizes use of cooperative learning instructional methods is that the use of methods that are consistent with a student's culture can have a positive effect on his or her motivation and achievement. There is evidence that African-American children (Richmond & Weiner, 1973), and Hispanic children (Kagan, 1985), are more positively oriented toward cooperation with peers than are middle-class Anglo children. There is also evidence that African-American and Hispanic children gain more in achievement from cooperative learning than do Anglo children (Slavin, 1995). This evidence

supports a view that exclusive use of individualistic instruction with individualistic goal structures creates a "structural bias" against students from cultures that emphasize communal values and cooperation (Kagan, 1985).

A Communal Organization of School — The school must be organized as a community to support stronger teacher-student bonds and address adolescents' needs for affiliation.

The research literature suggests that schools are more effective when they have a communal organization. Bryk & Driscoll (1988) have found that secondary schools that rated high on an index of communality showed higher teacher morale and efficacy and lower student absenteeism. These authors identified three primary features of school communities: (a) collegial relations among teachers, coupled with a "diffuse" advocate role, (b) a shared value system, and (c) a common agenda of activities.

In order to allow teachers to function as narrow subject matter specialists, many middle schools have most teachers teach one subject at one grade level to five different sections of students. In many urban middle schools, this approach to staffing results in each student receiving academic instruction from five to eight different teachers each day and each teacher providing instruction to at least 165 different students each day. This approach to staffing a middle school program leads to distant, unproductive student-teacher relationships. The teachers don't know the students, the students don't know the teachers, and there is no genuine opportunity for close, enduring student-teacher bonds to develop.

Central East Middle School has replaced this fully departmentalized approach to staffing with a semidepartmentalized, interdisciplinary team core program that greatly reduces the number of different students most teachers are responsible for by modestly increasing the number of subject areas in which they provide instruction. Under this approach, each student receives all of his or her academic instruction from a two- or three-person interdisciplinary teacher team and most teachers are responsible for serving only 66 to 99 students rather than 165 students. In many cases, Central East Middle School assigns teacher teams to the same cluster of 66 to 99 students for more than one year. This approach to staffing asks many teachers to serve as a "specialists" in more than one subject and at more than one grade level, so that close, productive student-teacher relationships can flourish.

At Evans Junior High School, to address students' needs for affiliation and help them see themselves as a community of learners, the principal organizes weekly assemblies by grade level. During these assemblies, students bring to attention significant events or concerns that occurred during the week. They get publicly recognized for exemplary performance, behavior, and progress. They also receive information about motivational and volitional strategies to

help them cope with different situations. Some of these strategies are problem-focused, others are emotion-focused. Drawing on research by Corno & Kanfer (1993), the Talent Development team is preparing an instrument on volitional control strategies, to assist this effort in a more systematic way.

The staff at Evans Junior High School is planning to reduce departmentalization next year by training current reading teachers to also teach English/Language Arts and training current English/Language Arts teachers to also teach reading. This will allow them to reduce the number of different teachers a student sees each day by one and will reduce the number of different students each Reading/English teacher is responsible for by at least 50 students.

A Total Detracking of Instruction — Classroom organization replaces tracking with approaches that make student diversity in the classroom an asset rather than an impediment to learning and motivation.

To make heterogeneous classrooms work well in a school with a demanding higher order curriculum, certain predictable challenges must be met.

First, some students will need frequent extra help within the classroom in order to succeed at the challenging learning tasks they face. As noted, teachers at Central East Middle School have received (and teachers at Evans Junior High School will receive) extensive training in the use of Student Team Learning instructional methods (Slavin, 1990; Stevens, 1989; Stevens, Hammonds, & Durkin, 1991). Teachers at both sites will implement lesson plans that use these methods to accommodate student diversity by making effective peer-tutoring within mixed-ability student teams a daily occurrence.

Second, research on student boredom suggests that students' interest and enjoyment are decreased when the learning challenges that they face are poorly matched to their current skill levels (e.g., Csikszentmihilyi & Nakamura, 1989). One of the main rationales for traditional ability grouping is that it permits teachers to match learning challenges more closely to students' skill levels. Growth-oriented assessment, described in the next section, provides continuous learning challenges as students seek to display growth in skills as well as excellence.

Third, anti-academic norms among students often undermine heterogeneous grouping plans that challenge former low-track students to work harder and meet higher standards in heterogeneous classrooms. To prevent this undermining, the Talent Development approach proactively combats anti-academic norms and fosters peer support for achievement by establishing team goals that can only be reached if all team members give their best efforts and

help each other. The team goals and the improvement-focused "equal opportunity" evaluation and recognition system help students think about intense effort in a different way. Trying hard becomes less likely to be viewed as a selfish or subservient behavior motivated by a desire to outperform others or to win adult approval, and more likely to be viewed as an altruistic act motivated by a desire to "not let the team down." This transformation makes it possible for students to work hard without being accused of "apple-polishing" or "acting white" (Mac Iver, Reuman, & Main, 1995).

Growth-Oriented Assessment — The model for accountability and evaluation that the teachers use in the classroom combines ratings of both excellence and progress, so it can be successfully used with heterogeneous groups.

Under the Talent Development Model, each assignment given to a student is rated for both excellence and progress. Students get prorated extra points for scoring above a pre-established criterion. The reward for excellence can be supplemented by prorated progress points from test to test, if the student's current score exceeds his/her previous score. Poor performance on one test can always be significantly ameliorated by a better performance on a subsequent test (Madhere, 1995). Thus, the Talent Development Model relies on improvement-focused evaluation systems that provide all students with meaningful improvement goals regardless of whether they are relative novices or relative experts at the learning tasks they face. This improvement-focused accountability system ensures that all students are optimally-challenged and have an equal opportunity for success — if they work hard — regardless of their individual starting points (Mac Iver & Reuman, 1993).

A Multi-Layered Pedagogy — This includes flexible use of time and resources to prevent course failures and grade retentions and to nurture students' talents.

All schools have some students who fall behind or learn more slowly than others. If schools begin to take seriously the challenge of offering all students access to a demanding core curriculum that prepares them for college and that features teaching for understanding, then schools will need to design effective "catch up" programs to provide additional support for students whose current proficiency is considerably below that of their classmates. At Central East Middle School, struggling students receive a substantial extra dose of instruction: these students are given an extra period of math or reading each day for ten weeks instead of their regularly scheduled electives.

The extra-period approach has some definite advantages compared to more common remedial programs. Attendance is high because the elective period of academic instruction is part of the regular school day; it is not a pull-out program, so students do not miss regular

academic instruction; and it does not stigmatize students because it is viewed as just another elective class to which students disperse.

Evans Junior High School has initiated an after-school tutoring effort called "Yes to Success." For this year, the program has set a modest but specific goal for preparing students in need for the upcoming administration of the CTBS. The initiative is likely to be expanded next fall. Evans Junior High School is also considering the use of the extra-period approach.

Career Exploration — This calls for ongoing occupational exploration and goal-setting activities that use appropriate role models and future-oriented exercises; it also involves guidance experiences that encourage students' college aspirations and provide them with information about the realistic steps toward different secondary and postsecondary options.

Advisors of sixth- and seventh-graders at Central East Middle School have begun leading their students through a series of specific lessons from the Talent Development Middle School's *Career Exploration and Educational Decision-Making Course*. In this course, students engage in systematic self-assessment, make career and educational plans, gather occupational information, interview representatives of a wide variety of careers, identify suitable high school programs, and explore a wide variety of occupations. Appendix B provides a list of the lessons in this course for grades 6, 7, and 8.

A Career Exploration/College Exploration program has also begun at Evans Junior High School. Students have received a package that includes copies of the College Digest and a booklet on occupational interest exploration. This spring, students will complete a full self-assessment inventory of their interests and skills, using Holland's *Self-Directed Search* and other instruments. This will be followed by a series of follow-up activities.

Family Affirmation — This goes beyond the traditionally loose connection between the home and the school to involve new forms of partnerships with parents and the community to coordinate learning activities and reinforcements in each setting.

Parents and community members are being recruited at each school to represent multiple living role models in each occupational type (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) in the career exploration program. These role models will meet with students who have expressed interest in their occupational types to describe their occupations and the education and training needed for those occupations.

At Central East Middle School, all parents of seventh-graders are asked to participate in their child's high school selection process. This includes taking their child to the School District of Philadelphia's Spring High School Fair (with the school providing transportation)

as well as completing an interactive homework assignment with their child regarding high school selection.

At Evans Junior High School, the Active Affirmation program works directly with parents, recognizing them as the primary agents for the development of character in their children and providing them with tools and resources to assist them in competently fulfilling that role. The Active Affirmation program provides parents with a *Parent's Handbook of Character Development*. A section of the handbook contains a collection of quotations as a resource for parents in promoting character development and cultural literacy. Parents provide their children "food for thought" drawn from a wide variety of thinkers from different historical periods and different cultures on a wide variety of topics, from friendship and freedom to justice and wisdom. Every week, parents select a quotation from this section and post it on the refrigerator as a "message to my child." Parents who wish to be more involved can periodically have their children research the author of the "message" for the week and have them write a paragraph about his/her life and work. Appendix C contains the *Parent's Handbook* title page, a letter that parents receive from the school explaining the program, and an example of the "cultural literacy notepad" on which students write their thoughts about each quotation.

Summary and Conclusions

Central East Middle School and Evans Junior High School have begun implementing essential components of the Talent Development Middle School. Although this work is at an early stage, these schools are recognizably different from schools operating under the traditional "sorting" paradigm.

During the next couple of years, as these schools infuse a demanding, active learning curriculum into additional subject areas, as growth-oriented assessment becomes the norm, and as effective career exploration, cultural empowerment, and family affirmation activities occur more regularly, the transformation of these schools from "organizations partly responsible for placing young adolescents at risk" to "talent development communities" will become complete. During the same time period, we welcome the opportunity to begin working with other middle schools who wish to abandon a sorting paradigm and adopt high-expectations instruction for all supported by the essential components of the Talent Development Model.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT TEAM READING

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STUDENT TEAM WRITING

Student Team Reading

The Student Team Reading (STR) program changes both the instructional processes and the curriculum to further students' reading comprehension and understanding of good literature. Reading instruction is made more meaningful because students read good literature (e.g., award-winning novels) rather than stories from a "basal." The teacher prepares the students to read the book by introducing the author and the genre, discussing relevant background information, and introducing the new vocabulary words. Then, for each section of the book, students engage in a series of cooperative learning activities which the teacher monitors. The teacher leads the students through a discussion of the daily activities as the students complete them. The activities include:

Partner reading. The students read a section of the book first silently, then orally with a partner. During oral reading, each student reads aloud while the partner follows the text and helps the reader with his/her errors. The oral reading practice is designed to build fluency and automaticity of decoding (Samuels, 1979), and the repeated reading builds both automaticity and comprehension (Anderson et al., 1985).

Treasure Hunts. Students are given challenging, high-level questions about the book they are reading that require them to think analytically and comparatively and draw conclusions, and to analyze the plot, literary devices, and the writer's style and technique. For example, students are asked to explain the significance of the main characters and setting in relation to the story, draw conclusions about any special relationships between characters, make predictions regarding what will happen next based on solid textual evidence that they have already read, and develop interesting, unusual or thought-provoking ideas related to the book's theme. Students discuss the answers to Treasure Hunt questions with their partner, then each student writes their answers separately. The use of treasure hunts helps ensure a schoolwide focus in RELA on higher-order competencies.

Word mastery. The students practice saying the new vocabulary aloud with their partners until they are able to say them accurately and smoothly. This helps students master the new words so that they will not interfere with their comprehension of that section of the book (Perfetti, 1985). After reading the appropriate section, students write a vivid, elaborated "meaningful sentence" for each selected word from the vocabulary list. The goal is to show they understand the meaning of the word by embedding context clues in the sentence which help to create a picture in the reader's mind (e.g. "Richard was so *anxious* about the test he had to take that sweat poured down his forehead and his hands shook wildly" not "Richard was *anxious*"). Students use a metacognitive checking strategy to evaluate the meaningfulness of

their sentences. They take the vocabulary word out of the sentence to see if they can substitute other words in its place. If the word can be replaced easily by other words (excluding synonyms), the sentence is not a "meaningful" use of the vocabulary word.

Story-retelling. After reading the selection and discussing it in their teams and with the whole class, students summarize the main parts to their partners. Summarizing and paraphrasing content in one's own words has been found to improve students' comprehension of what has been read (Weinstein, 1982).

Story-related writing. After reading the selection, the students are given "Adventures in Writing" prompts that require them to respond in a brief composition to what they have just read. The writing activities allow students to elaborate upon what they have read and relate it to their prior knowledge and experiences, thus increasing their depth of comprehension (Anderson et al., 1985).

Extension activities. These activities offer a variety of cross-curriculum assignments that use writing, research, fine arts and media, dramatics, or interdisciplinary projects to explore themes and ideas from the story.

Tests. Three tests follow each section of a book: A story test assessing students' understanding of the story (students respond to a mixture of analytical and detail-oriented questions about the story's main issues), a word meaning test (students write meaningful sentences for selected vocabulary words), and a "words out loud" test (students read the Word Mastery List aloud quickly and accurately to the teacher or other adult). The students complete the tests independently and they are scored by the teacher. The test scores are used to determine team scores and team recognition.

Explicit instruction in comprehension strategies. Students receive explicit instruction in comprehension strategies such as identifying main ideas and themes, drawing conclusions, making predictions, and understanding figurative language. The instruction provides students with comprehension-fostering strategies and metacognitive checking strategies such as those developed in basic and applied research in reading comprehension (e.g., Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Paris, Lipson, & Wixon, 1983; Stevens, 1988). After teacher-directed instruction in the strategies, students engage in cooperative learning activities to master the strategies. Teachers then review and apply the strategies when relevant to later literature selections.

Student Team Writing

The Student Team Writing (STW) program (Stevens, Hammonds, & Durkin, 1991) uses a process writing approach to teaching writing and language arts. The goal of the program is to get students to write often and to use their peers in the classroom as their audience. Students work cooperatively when planning, revising, and editing their writing, and they learn to give feedback to one another as well as learn to use feedback that has been given. Through this process, students get more opportunities to write, receive feedback on how their audience responded to their writing, and use their peers' responses to improve their writing.

APPENDIX B

OUTLINE OF CAREER EXPLORATION

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EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING LESSONS

Career Exploration/Educational Decision-Making Lessons

— Sixth Grade —

1. **Introduction to Career Exploration: Why People Work**
   Students brainstorm to identify reasons why people work in certain occupations.

2. **Gathering Information About Yourself: Interests**
   Teachers administrate the Self-Directed Search — Career Explorer

3. **Picture This?***
   Teacher take "head shots" of individual students. Students then cut out their faces, mount them on paper, and complete their self-portraits by drawing elements that indicate occupations in which they are interested. Teachers may wish to omit the photographs and have students simply draw pictures in their entirety.

4. **Time Line***
   Students, given a timeline, fill in each step they plan to take in the future to reach their career goals.

5. **What People Do at Work**
   Students view a video of six occupations and identify facts about them.

6-7. **What's My Line?**

8. **Preparing to Observe Occupations (within the school)**
   Students identify their subjects. Teachers discuss proper behaviors and logistics, and distribute fact-finding sheets.

9. **Observing Occupations**
   Students spend the class period engaged in pre-arranged observations.

10. **Sharing Observations**

11-12. **Charades***
   Given the name of an occupation, individual students pantomime related activities in an effort to get classmates to guess correctly. Teachers interject questions that cause students to share what they know about each occupation.

13-14. Exploring Careers by Reading Interviews

Students, working in teams, read brief interviews with persons representing a variety of occupations, respond to a list of questions about the featured occupations, and present their information to the class.

15. Exploring Occupations by Conducting Interviews

Students brainstorm ideas for persons they might interview, identify their subjects, and collectively compose questions they would like to ask. Interviews should take place within a one-week period so that students will be prepared for the next step.

16. How to Compose a Profile Using Interview Notes

Teachers model the steps in transforming interview notes to a profile of an interview subject and the occupation he/she represents. A "formula" for the composition that teachers may use will be included in the lesson plan.

17. Occupational Scavenger Hunt

Students' profiles are posted around their classrooms. Teams of students circulate to read each other's profiles and collect pieces of information about selected occupations.

18. Finding Out About Careers through Volunteering

Students will identify ways in which volunteering would benefit themselves and their communities, and brainstorm ideas for volunteering withing the community.

19. Brainstorming: Ideas for Volunteering Within the School

20. Organizing an In-school Volunteer Project (with follow-up activities to take place during alternate advisory periods)

21. Personal Interests

Students, working in teams, compose questions about occupations discussed in previous lessons and pose the questions to opposing teams in an effort to "stump" them. Teams rotate in round robin fashion until each team has questioned every other team.

22+ Final Projects

Students use the remaining career exploration classes to complete and present individual or small-group projects related to one career possibility of their choice.

Examples of projects (by Holland Code category) include:

Realistic	Build/invent something and present it to the class.
Investigative	Do a scientific study or a survey of schoolmates, and explain the results to the class.
Social	Solicit "Dear Abby" letter from classmates (writing under fictitious names) and create a newsletter in which you respond to the letters.
Artistic	Draw, paint, sculpt, compose or perform an original work.
Enterprising	Complete a business plan for a "dream company;" write and deliver a persuasive speech; write a "How-to" book(let).
Conventional	Volunteer to be a library, office or teacher's aide; write about the experience and share it with the class.

Final Class Awarding of certificates of completion

* Lessons suggested by members of CEM's faculty

Career Exploration/Educational Decision-making Lessons

— Seventh Grade —

1. **A. What We Know About the World of Work (2)**
   A review of information from the seventh-grade lessons in a Team Jeopardy format

   B. Self-Directed Search — Career Explorer

2. **What's the Big Deal About Seventh Grade? A Survey of Study Habits, Grades, and Effort. Making a Contract with Myself (1-2)**

3. **Gathering Information About Yourself: Survey of Work Values (1)**

4. **Your Career and Educational Plans: The Seven Steps (1)**

5. **Gathering Occupational Information (2-3)**

6. **Students renew their " Contracts with Themselves" (1)**

High School News will be the reference for the following lessons:

7. **Facts About High School (1-2)**
   A Jigsaw activity

8. **Identifying Suitable High School Programs (1)**

9. **Name that Job! (1)**
   Given characteristics of certain types of jobs, students in teams must name in a given time period as many jobs that fit in that category as they can. Examples include jobs in which one: organizes people, works outside, uses one's hands, is concerned with elderly people, works alone, writes a lot, etc.

10. **Weighing Career Alternatives I (2)**

11. **Weighing Career Alternatives II (2)** (Number of lessons subject to change) Completing lists of alternatives; identifying arguments for and against certain occupations; listing important things to consider; ranking one's possibilities

12. **Students renew their "Contracts with Themselves" (1)**

13. **Preparing for Career Day of the Future (1)**
    Students using information gathered in Lesson 6 prepare for mock Career Day talks.

14. Career Day of the Future (1-2)

Students stand before classmates and share information about "their jobs," as if they were adults visiting the school. Students can be encouraged to dress the part, if they wish. Classmates are encouraged to ask questions of their Career Day visitors.

15. Exploring Regional Occupations (1)

16. Exploring Occupations through Entrepreneurship (1)

Defining the term "entrepreneurship;" reading/discussing minibiograhpies of young entrepreneurs

17. Becoming an Entrepreneur (1-2)

Students will plan imaginary businesses using as motivation excerpts from *The Toothpaste Millionaire*

18. Becoming an Entrepreneur: Presentation of Business Plans (1-2)

19. Looking Back on What We've Learned (2)

A review activity in a TGT format

20. Presentation of Certificates of Completion (1)

Career Exploration/Educational Decision-making Lessons
— Eighth Graders —

1. **What We Know About the World of Work (2)**
   A review of information covered in seventh grade using a single round TGT format
   and
   The SDS (Self-Directed Search — Career Explorer) for Eighth Grade Newcomers

2. **Thinking Ahead: Creating Educational and Career Timelines (1)**

3. **Making Contracts with Ourselves (1)**

4. **Preparing to Apply to High Schools (2)**
   A whole-class exercise in making a high school selection for a fictitious student and completing a high school application

5. **Completing (Actual) High School Applications (1)**

6. **Writing and Sharing Jobs Descriptions for "Dream Jobs" (2)**
   Students, given a "Job Description Form," will identify specific tasks they will perform in their "dream jobs."

7. **Renewing Contracts with Ourselves (1)**

8. **Gathering Information About Requirements for High School Graduation (1)**

9. **To Work, or Not To Work? The Pros and Cons of Working While Going to High School (1)**

10. **The Dangers of Making Money Illegally (1)**

11. **Why Go To College? (1)**
    Reading about and discussing the benefits of a college education (jobs that require college degrees, and the comparative incomes of high school dropouts, high school graduates, and college graduates)

12. **Students Renew their Contracts with Themselves (1)**

13. **How Students Select Colleges (2)**
    Discussing types of colleges, examining college catalogs, and identifying considerations to be made when selecting a college

14. How Colleges Select Students I (1)

What colleges seek in selecting students, including discussion of the SAT's

15. How Colleges Select Students II (1)

Examining college applications

16. Visiting a Local College Campus/Talking with College Students (2)

Depending upon the arrangements that can be made, students either tour a college campus or participate in a discussion of college life with college students who visit the school. The first class period devoted to this topic is to be used to prepare students for the visit by helping them identify questions they would like to ask of college representatives.

17. Students Renew their Contracts with Themselves (1)

18. Preparing Questions for Career Day (1)

Students prepare for their school's career day by brainstorming to identify questions they would like to ask of their guest speakers.

19. Identifying Jobs Kids Can Hold (1)

Students will work in groups to identify jobs middle school-age children can hold and the future careers for which such jobs can prepare them.

20. What Employers Want in Their Employees (1)

Students first brainstorm to identify the qualities they think they would want if they were employers, then read brief selections against which they can check the contents of their brainstorming list.

21. Composing a Resume (1-2)

Students will use a sample kid's resume as a model for their own. If computers are available, students should use word processing software to produce final drafts.

22. How to Handle Yourself During an Interview (2)

Students read about the purpose of interviews and what to do during interviews, followed by a session in role-playing interview situations.

23. Looking Back on What We've Learned (2)

A review activity in two-round team Jeopardy format

APPENDIX C

ACTIVE AFFIRMATION PROGRAM MATERIALS

ACTIVE AFFIRMATION

PARENTS' HANDBOOK OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

CRESPAR
TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
HOWARD UNIVERSITY

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON THE
EDUCATION OF STUDENTS PLACED AT RISK

Dear Parent:

The principal and teachers at Evans Junior High School have entered a partnership with the Talent Development project at Howard University, in a continuing effort to offer your child the best possible education. **Your contribution to this effort is invaluable**.

As your child enters the teenage years, he/she has come to one of the major crossroads in life, this is a time when physical, intellectual and emotional changes take place. Physical growth obeys the law of nature, so it is automatic. But intellectual or emotional growth is not automatic. Growth in these two areas requires a great deal of help. Your child must begin to define a personal identity; he or she must carefully make choices regarding what is going to be meaningful in his or her life. **That is how character is formed**. Making such choices is not an easy task. Neither your child nor you can afford to leave the outcome to chance. You must **provide good "food for thought."** That is what *Active Affirmation* is all about.

We have prepared this booklet of quotes to help your child with his/her intellectual and emotional development. Consider these quotes as a kind of vitamins for the mind. They are no substitute to what you are already doing to ensure your child's psychological health. But they can serve as supplements. We have included a very diverse group of thinkers from different time periods and cultures. Select the quotes you like and share them with your child. Pace yourself. Do not try to share them all at once. (Remember, an overdose of even a good thing could be unhealthy).

We suggest the following schedule. **Every week, choose one quote and post it in a place where your child is sure to see it**, such as on the refrigerator. Keep it there the entire week. By the end of the week, return the quote to the binder for future use, and select a new one. The booklet includes enough statements to cover more than a year.

When your child comments on a particular statement, take the opportunity to discuss it. **Talk about how the thought applies** to some day-to-day situations or experiences from your own life. Mention a proverb from your culture that expresses the same idea. Encourage your child to learn more about the author. In the back of this binder, you will find a **"notepad"** which lists a few questions to get the conversation started.

By following these simple steps, you can contribute a great deal to the development of **your child's character and literacy**.

The Talent Development team wishes you and your family well.

2900 Van Ness Street, N.W., Room 427-29
Washington, DC 20008
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Fax (202) 806-8808

CULTURAL LITERACY NOTEPAD

(for your child's thoughts on each statement of interest)
(Make copies of this page as needed)

1. What does this statement mean to you?
2. Do you think this is an opinion many people share?
3. Is there a different way to say the same thing? Think of a statement by another person.
4. What if I were to tell you something that contradicts this belief? How would you answer?
5. Have you shared this thought with any of your friends? What was their reaction?
6. Do you think this statement could be a nice theme for a song or a rap?

Write down your answers to some of these questions. If you think they are really "deep," it might be a good idea to have your teacher include them in your portfolio.

CRESPAR

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